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20 April 1962

Rider for Cuba Memorandum

Reactions in the Non-Communist World

1. The general and underlying attitude throughout the world toward the US-Cuba dispute is that the US is making a mountain out of a mole-hill. Few believe that the Castro regime poses a substantial threat to US security, or indeed to any important US interest. Hence, the reactions to a determined US effort to overthrow Castro would range from lack of sympathy or support to expressions and actions of opposition.

2. A few Latin American countries would like to see Castro disposed of. But even these would be concerned at an outright blockade as a means of bringing this about. Many leaders would genuinely fear a recrudescence of "Yankee imperialism," and most others would be moved by the pressure of public opinion to withhold any approval, let alone support, of the US action. There is virtually no chance that the OAS would approve the blockade. Many Latin American leaders, including some of the most influential, would probably go along with Soviet and neutralist efforts to organize world public and official opinion against the US.

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3. Outside Latin America, popular feeling would range from distaste to revulsion. Some people and governments would consider that the methods adopted by the US were out of all proportion to the stature and importance of the intended victim, that a sledge hammer was being used to crush a mosquito. Among these elements, US judgment and sense of balance would be called in question. Moreover, the action would undermine the US posture as a sincere advocate of decolonialzation and would reduce US ability to persuade the European powers to move rapidly in this direction.

4. In the underdeveloped countries, opinion would be less favorable, and the blockade would be looked upon as bullying, at best. Misgivings would be reinforced about US good will and the genuiness of US claims of interest in the emergence of sovereign states responsible for the managment of their own affairs. The US would be rendered less able to influence these countries on a wide range of issues: e.g., Palestine, Kashmir, West New Guinea, Laos.

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